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**SELF-HOMICIDE-MURTHUR;**

OR, SOME

**ANTIDOTES  
AND  
ARGUMENTS**

Gleaned out of the

**TREASURIES  
Of Our  
MODERN CASUISTS**

AND

**DIVINES.**

Against that Horrid and Reigning Sin of

**Self-Murther.**

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By **T. P. Esq;** M. A. And formerly of *Clare-Hall*  
in *Cambridge*.

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SELF-MURDER

OF SORE

ANTIDOTES

ARGUMENTS

THE AS

DIVINE

Self-Murder

*THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.*

TO HIS

Worthy and Learned Friend John Upton of New-  
ington-Hall in the County of Middlesex, Esq;  
one of the Commissioners of His Majesties Customs.

Worshipful Sir,

**T**HE Scene of those Tragedies which have  
been lately Acted by some misguided per-  
sons upon themselves, hath been so publicly  
laid, that it hath been obvious to many eyes; and  
the sad report hath accoll'd, and arriv'd at more  
ears: but whether they may entitle their Ori-  
ginal Extraction to a Learned but unfortunate  
Treatise, stil'd *Bianhanatos*, wherein Self-killing  
in several Cases is concluded not to be Murder,  
I cannot positively determine. However, I have  
collected all the Antidotes I could meet with,  
out of the Laboratories of Modern Casuists, to  
countermine and dissipate the venome of those

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

Arguments that are knit together to support this sanguinary Assertion. But, Sir, I know you have so much Art to judge, and Candor to believe, that when I compos'd this Treatise, I wholly design'd to offer it up to the scrutiny of clearer speculations than mine own; amongst the Masters of which, I know none a more Adequate Arbiter, or Competent Judge to winnow it, than your self; from whose Charity I may hope that which I could not expect from the Press, that is, the pardon of those mistakes; of which possibly he may be guilty of, who is,

SIR,

*Your Most Humble and*

*Affectionate Servant,*

**THOMAS PHILIPOT.**



## To the READER,

Courteous Reader,

**H**OW far an offending Criminal may be his own Executioner, hath puzzled the Heads, and disquieted the Pens of our modern Casuists; but at last the most Learned of them have fix'd upon this determination: That in some judicial Censures and Sentences that are not sanguinary, that is, do not reach to the effusion of Blood; and where no Action is immediately to be performed by the offender upon himself, he is by a passive surrender, and submission of himself to the Law, to be his own Executioner. And there is no more indecency (they say) in the self-infliction of these Medicinal punishments, than there is for a man to mingle his own severe and disgusting Potions to let himself Blood, or launce a corroding Ulcer, the cases wherein the Delinquent is to verifie the Sentence of the Law, by executing it upon himself, are these that follow.

If the Law imposes a Penalty, ipso facto to be incurr'd; if it be equal, moderate and tolerable, the Conscience is obliged to submit to a voluntary susception of it: so if a person be blasted with the censure of Excommunication, he is not only engaged to submit to those separations, estrangements, or alienations from Society, and avoidings which he finds from the duty of others: but if he be in a stranger place, where they know not of it, and begin Divine Service, he is bound in Conscience to go away, to resign an Ecclesiastical Benefice, if he be possessed of one; and other things of the same necessity, for verification of the sentence. As if a Benefice should be offered to the excommunicate person, he is obliged not to accept of it, being by the sentence rendred irregular, or to execute any other Office to which, by that censure, he is declared and made unapt and inhabile; and the reason is, because every act of Communion,  
and

To the Reader.

and office in his Case, is a direct rebelling against the Sentence of the Law, the verification of which depends as much upon himself as upon others; for every such person is like a man that has the Plague upon him, all men that know it avoid him; but because all men do not know it, he is bound to decline them, and in no case to run into their company, whether they know him, or know him not.

If a Law be enacted, that if a Clerk within twelve moneths after the Collation of a Parish-Church, be not Ordained a Priest, he shall forfeit his Ecclesiastical Benefice; if he does not submit to the Sentence, and recede from his Parish or Incumbency, he is tied in Conscience to make Restitution of all the Profits he shall receive, or consume.

So if a Law be Constituted, that who-ever is a common Swearer, shall ipso facto be infamous; he that is guilty, is oblig'd in Conscience not to give testimony in a Cause *ex Law*, but to be his own Judge and Executioner of that Sentence. But whether these precedents do intrinsically and *ex natura rei* oblige the Consciences of all persons, and universally in all times, and in all places, I leave to thy scrutiny and justice, at once both to judge and determine; and so I proceed.

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Self-



*Self-Homicide-Murther.*

**T**HE Law of Nature is nothing but the Law of God given to mankind, for the conservation of his Nature, and promotion of his perfective end. A Law of which a man sees a reason, and feels a necessity, God is the Law-giver, practical Reason or Conscience is the Record; but revelation, and express declaring of it, was the first publication and evidence of it; until then it had not all the solemnities of a Law, though it was pass'd in the Court, and Decreed and Recorded. God is the Author of our Nature, and made a Law fit for it by his own Authority, and proper Sanction, and sent the principles of that Law together with it; not that whatsoever is in Nature, or Reason, is therefore a Law, because it is reasonable, or because it is natural; but that God took so much of prime Reason as would make us good and happy, and establish'd it into a Law, which became, and was stil'd, the Law of Nature; both because this Law is in *Materia Naturali*, that is concerning the good, which refers to the prime necessities of Nature; and also, because being Divine, in respect of the Author, the principles of this Law are natural, in respect of the time of their Institution, being together with our nature, though they were drawn out by God severally, in several periods of the World, who made them Laws actually by his command, which in nature were only so by disposition. By this Law the Patriarchs lived; by this *Noah* was declared just, and  
*Abraham*

Abraham was the Friend of God; for this, though not written in Tables of stone, was yet written in the Tables of their hearts: that is it was by God so imprinted in their Consciences, that by it they were sufficiently instructed how to walk, and please God. And this is the sense of Tertullian, whose determination as to this particular, is often cited by our Modern Casuists: his words are these, *Ante Legem Moyfi scriptam in Tabulis lapideis Legem contendendo non scriptam quæ Naturaliter intelligebatur, & à Patribus custodiebatur; nam unde Noc justus inventus est? si non illum Naturalis Legis Justitia precedebat, unde Abraham Amicus Dei deputatus? si non de Equitate & Justitia Legis hujus Naturalis.* Out of these general descriptions of the Law of Nature, I may spin out this Definition; The Law of Nature is the universal Law of the World, concerning some common necessities to which we are inclin'd by Nature, invited by Consent, prompted by Reason, and bound upon us by the command of God: and the first part of this Definition is strengthened, and made evidently true, by the aptnesses of the Heathen to Justice, and disposition to Laws, concreated with their understandings, which are stil'd by the Schools, *Species congenita & concreate*; and by Musfinger and the Civil Law, they are nam'd, *Præcepta seu formulæ honestatis præcepta*, signatures or draughts of moral honesty stamp'd upon the hearts of men in their first creation by God Himself, which super-induce and imprint upon their Consciences such Fears and Opinions, that pass upon mankind the obligation and reverence of Laws.

But as in the body of man there is great variety of Accidents, and mutability of matter, but still that variety is govern'd by the various flexures of Reason, which remains unchang'd in all its revolutions and vicissitudes; or if you will, in all the complications and twistings about the collateral

teral Accidents, and is the same, though working otherwise ; so it is in the Law, whose Reason and Obligation continues, even when it is made to comply with changing Instances.

Now, God being the prime Law-giver, can by his eternal Legislative power, contract or enlarge this Law of Nature, by Interpretation, or Dispensation, especially when the publick good of mankind is concerned, as in the case of *Cain's* marriage with his Sister, or when his Power, Jurisdiction, Dominion and Property is to be evidenced ; as in the case of the Israelites deverting and spoiling the Egyptians of their Ear-rings : or, Thirdly, when the Faith, Obedience, and Patience of good men is to be tried and exemplified ; as when he commanded *Abraham* to sacrifice his only son *Isaac* ; but God (say Divines) will not, it being inconsistent with his Justice absolutely root up and extinguish the Law of Nature, because it is that Law by which he will arraign Pagans, Infidels, and Heathens ; at the last General Audit of the last day, for then they shall receive their final doom and sentence : not that they lived out of the Pale of Christianity, or did not believe in Christ, or the Christian Law, for alas they never heard of either, but because they did not live up to the Law of Nature, and the light diffused from it ; or, if you please, up to that moral rectitude that was the result of both, whose beams were sufficient to have made them shun the foul obliquities and irregular pollutions of human life.

Now, the Law of Nature being thus stated, cannot be dispensed with by any humane power whatsoever : and this *Cicero* clearly saw, by a Ray darted from it, when he defin'd it to be, *Vera ratio, natura congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans sempiterna.* And my Assertion is fortified

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by these reasons; the Laws of Nature being bound upon us by the Law of God, cannot be dispenced withal; unless by a power equal to the same, or superior to that which made the sanction; but that cannot be at all, neither can they be dispenced with at all, unless by God Himself.

Secondly, whatsoever is forbidden by the Natural Law, cannot be permitted by the Civil; because when the Highest Power hath interposed, then the inferior and subordinate hath no Authority; for, since it hath its Being from the superior; it cannot be suppos'd it can prejudice that from whence it had all its Being.

Thirdly, I argue from the difference between Divine and Humane Laws; Divine Laws do originally and immediately oblige by their own prime Efficiency and Authority, but Humane Laws bind the Conscience not intrinsically, formally, and primarily from themselves, but by Power, Virtue and Efficacy transfus'd and deriv'd into them by the Divine Command, by whose Efficiency they work obedience to themselves mediately and instrumentally. Again, Divine Laws bind the will and the understanding; Humane Laws, only the will, which is the subject of Humane Laws: Humane Laws only consider the outward action, not the inward opinion; you must obey man, when at the same time, without sin, you may believe the Law to be imprudent, imperfect, or fit to be disannull'd, because there was a weakness in the sanction; they could not foresee the evil that was future; the inconveniences of some men, the impossibilities of many things; and the intolerable burden and pressure upon sundry persons. But in the Laws of God, we must submit our most secret thoughts, and we must be sure so to obey Humane Laws, as we keep for God the Prerogative of his having unveil'd the Law of Nature as much as I could. I

come

Come now to demonstrate, that Self-Murther breaks up, and dismantles those defences the Law of Nature has erected against it, by making a bloody Onset or Invasion upon two prime Branches or Ingredients of it; that is, self-preservation, and do as you would be done unto.

Now, self-preservation is of universal extent and latitude, and so wound up with the Law of Nature, that it is made by *Ulpian* to be the Law itself; for thus he defines it, *Jus naturale est*, (says he) *quod natura omnia animalia docuit*; a natural right that Nature hath taught every creature: and this is evident in the youngest creatures, in whom, though there be but slender principles of Life, and faint evidences of a Being, yet if you attempt to destroy them by drowning, or any other engine of ruine, with what struggling and reluctancy will they endeavour to decline their early and angry fate, is notoriously obvious; and if it hold good in these creatures that are guided only by such a glimmering principle of sense, then should it be much more eminently manifest in man, in whom God hath planted reason, to check and controul the unruly and disordered passions of the soul, and especially to repress those two imperious and insolent Tribunes of it, the irascible and concupiscible appetite.

And this is evident from the practice of the most barbarous Nations; who appoint subservient Officers and Executioners to inflict death upon Delinquents, because they know that is at horrent to all natural Instinct, and destructive of the Law of Nature, which obliges every man to preserve himself as long as possibly he can, for Criminals and Malefactors to unshuce their lives by laying violent hands upon themselves.

I come now to assert, that Self-Homicide overturns and breaks down that other prime principle of the Law of



Nature; do as you would be done unto, which is the great Conservatory of commutative Justice, which is the great Ligament that fastens and ties together all Humane Society, and without which, they would become as wild and sanguinary as an herd of Wolves or Tigers. Now, if it be a breach of Justice to strike my neighbour, it is a greater violation to kill him; and if it be so signal an impiety to take away his life maliciously, and by propensed deliberation, it is certainly a crime of vaster magnitude, for a man by self-murder to take away his own, only upon this consideration, that every person is next neighbour to himself. And this method of arguing is conformable to the pages of sacred Writ, which prescribe, that every man should love his neighbour as himself. Now, if Self-murder were in any case formally and intrinsically lawful, God would not have had the love of every man to Himself, the great Original by which he was to copy out his love to his neighbour; for he knew, that if he were uncharitable to himself, he would be much more to him; for malice in the heart, commonly becomes murder in the hand.

And to declare what a ruinous inroad Self-murder makes upon the Law of Nature, and moral Justice, several Nations in Ages of an elder Inscription, to declare their detestation of a Fact, whose malignity was improv'd and enhans'd by so much unnaturalness decreed, that the bodies of those who had deprived themselves of life by an injurious violence, should be drag'd through the execrable Gates of Cities, by Antiquity stil'd *Porta Scelerata*, and then be interred in some obscure pits or caverns, called *Puticuli*; and in other places to disgrace this Fact, and make it more exemplary Criminal, they hung the bodies up of Self-murderers.

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The Canon and Civil Law denies the Rites of Christian Sepulture to Self-Homicides, unless it be in these three Cases; that is, if this self-destruction be acted by persons upon whom is super-induc'd stupefaction by Meagrim, Palsies, Epilepsies, Apoplexies, & the like. Secondly, by those whose judgment is clouded by the fogs and exhalations of a settled and deep rooted Melancholy, which frequently determines in madness. Thirdly, if it be performed by persons that are assaulted by violent Fevers, as Calentures, and the like, which are usually accompanied with a Phrensy; and to such persons as these, upon just and evident proof of their distemper, they do not deny the Obsequies of Christian Funeral.

For, in all deliberate sins, before they can come to their perfection, the Casuists affirm to be six steps, or gradations; the inclination of the will is the first; sin oftentimes enters in at that door, but of it self it only is a capacity, readiness, and disposition; and no act; but if these become facilities and promptitudes to sin, they are not innocent. The first beginning of sin is, when the will stops and rests it self upon the tempting object, and consents so far, that it will have it considered, and disputed; when the will is gone so far, it is past beyond what is natural, and comes so far towards choice and guiltiness, that it is yet no more a friend to virtue than to vice, and knows not which to chuse. The third step the will makes, is, when it is pleased with the thought and meditation of the sin; and this precedent relish may be called the *Antepast* of the action. The fourth step of the will beyond the white lines of innocence, is a desire to do the action, not clearly and distinctly, but under a conditional notion, if it were lawful or convenient. The fifth gradation is, when this obstacle is removed, and the heart consents to the sin, and then.

then there remains nothing but that it be contriv'd within. And then the sixth step is, when it is committed to the faculties and members, to go about their new and unhappy employment, and then both the inward and outward man have combin'd, and made up the body of a sin. Now, all these steps being the results of deliberation and debate, or of consent and choice, an understanding benighted with melancholy distempers, or a will distorted with a Phrensy, cannot be capable of; so that a mistied and darkned understanding, and an irregular will, acting by the hand, do their own preposterous work by a misguided instrument; so that although Physically and Naturally they are several actions, because Elicited, and acted by several faculties, yet morally they are but one; for what the hand acts, or eye sees, is neither good nor evil, but is made so by the understanding, or will. But I now proceed.

My second Argument against Self-Homicide is, that it destroys those obligations of Fidelity and Allegiance due to that Power under which we live; and if it be acted by a Wife, Son, or Daughter, then it subverts a double subjection, that that relates to a Prince, or Commonwealth; and that that is due to the injunctions of a Husband, and a Father. But then again, if it be performed by a Father, or a Mother that is a Widow, they violate that interest their children challenge in them, to whom they are to contribute support and maintenance, instruction and education, that so by manuring and cultivating their minds, they may improve their knowledge in Arts, either speculative, or practical, by which they may acquire a future subsistence.

Thirdly, sin is defin'd by the Schools, to be *Actus devians ab ordine debiti finis, contra regulam naturæ aut Legis Æternæ*. Now, they that lay violent hands upon themselves,

selves, destroy the order and end of their Creation, which is, to exercise all the Virtues both Moral and Theological, through the whole decursion of their lives, whose progressive growth and improvement, is by this Bloody Act wholly fore-laid and intercepted.

Fourthly, Self-Murder invades the power of the Magistrate; for if particular persons have no power over their own lives, collectively considered, they can have none neither, since general Assemblies and Conventions are made up of particular persons, and are like a Pillar, from whence, if you substract the several stones that compos'd it, the notion and appellation of a Pillar ceases. Now, if Self-killing were lawful, the power of life and death immediately invested by God in the supream Magistrate, would by degrees shrink to a despicable nothing. Now, that the Magistrate may legally punish criminal offenders, is clear from these reasons; that some Sort of Criminals should be put to death; is so necessary, that if it were not done, it would be directly and immediately a great uncharitableness; and the Magistrate should even in this particular, be more uncharitable than he can suppose to be, in putting Delinquents to death: for an High-way Thief and Murderer, if he be permitted, does cut off many persons who little think of death, and such as are innocent, as to the Common-wealth, are yet very guilty before God; for whose souls, and the space of whose repentance, there is but very ill provision made: if they may live, who shall send so many to Hell, by murdering such persons, who did not watch, and stand in readiness against the day of their sad Attest: if all such Assassins were to be free from punishment, the Common-wealth would be no society of Peace, but a direct state of War, a State destructive of all Government. But if there

there were any punishments less than death, the Gallies, the Mines and Prisons, would be nothing but seminaries of Villains, which, by their increase, would grow as ruinous as herds of Wolves and Tigers; and if ever they should break into a War, how many Patrimonies they would subvert, and how many souls would be sent to the Regions of Darkness, for want of time to perfect their Repentance, is sad to consider.

Now, if the condemned person had had never any time to repent, or not squandered away the opportunities conducing to it, he had never been reduced to this fatal exigent; and if he hath had, who is bound to give him as much as he will need? And if it be unlawful for a Magistrate to put a Malefactor, that has not sufficiently repented, to death, then no Villain shall ever die by the public hand of Justice; and the worse the man is, the longer he shall live, and the better he shall escape; for in this case, if he resolve privately, that he never will repent, he hath blunted the edge of the Sword, and weakened the hand of Justice for ever, that it shall never strike.

Fifthly, Self-murther cuts off that Obedience that men owe to the supream commands of God, by which he governs humane life; and I prove it thus, from parity of reason; under Civil Governments here below, Protection and Obedience are so complicated and interwoven, that when Obedience challenges protection, Protection reciprocally exacts Obedience; so that divers Casuists aver, that Custom and Tribute are *ex natura rei* intrinsically due to the supream Power, whether they be demanded or not; and the reason subjoyned is this, that the Prince is in possession virtually, by way of right; and those who by dark contrivances, and surreptitious ambushes, do actually defraud him, are only in possession by way of Fact: I may add,



add, that without a just supply, the protection and defence of the Supream Power would be so lame and crippled, that it could not stretch it self forth, to repulse the onsets of enemies from abroad, or dispel mutinies, and intestine Eruptions at home. Now, if obedience be thus highly due to temporal Rule, it is more eminently owing to the Eternal Government of God, who, every day, by his Power, Protection, and Providential restraints, rescues us from danger, and from sin. Now, to put our selves to death without the command of God, or his Vicegerent, is impiety and rebellion against God; it is like a servants running away from an indulgent Master; it is a desertion of our military station, and a violation of the Propriety, and peculiar Rights of God, who only hath power over our lives, and gives it to whom he pleases. God is our General, and hath confin'd us to our abode and station, which, until he call us off, must not be deserted; when God gives us our pass, then we must go, but we must not offer it an hour before; he that doth otherwise, is distrustful of the Divine Providence. Secondly, impious by running from his service; and thirdly, ungratefull to God, by destroying the noblest of his works here below. And this is asserted by the Platonick Philosophy, which tells us, that God gave us our soul, and fix'd it in the prison of the body, tying it there to a certain portion of work, therefore without his leave we must not go forth, lest we run from the work God enjoyn'd us.

I shall now reflect upon those examples that are brought out of the old Testament, to abet the legality of Self-Homicide; but before I wade farther in this Discourse, I shall premise some conclusions very necessary for clearing the point in issue. And first, it is certain there is nothing imitable in these examples, but the morality that is wrap'd

up

up in them; for the heroical actions of Pious men exhibited to us in Holy Writ, that were done *Plerophoria Spiritus*, or in *Gradu Heroico*, that is performed by an immediate excitation of the Spirit of God; as the example of *Phineas's* transfixing of *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, are not imitable by us; unless we can pretend to such an extraordinary instigation of Spirit as they had.

Secondly, sometimes the actions of good men are in themselves innocent, because done before a positive Law was established to prohibit them; but the symbolical actions by a supervening Law, became afterwards criminal. Thus the drunkenness of *Noah* is in Holy Writ remark'd without a black Character, and plainly told without a Censure, because he was not interdicted the free use of wine by any direct provision; but we are, and therefore it cannot legitimate it in us.

Thirdly, the actions of holy men in Scripture are complicated; and when they are propounded as Examples and the whole action described, there is something naturally good, and something bad; or something naturally good; or something peculiar and personally good, which cannot pass into example. Thus when it is affirm'd, that *Gideon*, *Jephthah*, *Sampson*, *David*, and *Baruch*, through Faith subdued Kingdoms; here their Faith is to be imitated, but not their Conquest, Invasion; and other Acts of Hostility, because examples in War are ever the most dangerous precedents, not only because men are then most violent and unreasonable, but that the Rules of War are least describ'd; and the necessities are contingent and many.

Fourthly, Actions done in the old Testament, (as I said before) do not warrant or justify us without such an express Command as they had: If the Command was special, and personal, the Obedience was just so limited, and  
could



could not pass beyond the persons; for actions of good men, if perform'd upon a violent cause, or a vehement necessity, are not to be imitated, unless it be in a like case, or an equal necessity.

Now then, to the great Examples and Precedents mentioned in Scripture, I shall afford this answer; that *Sampson* did primarily and directly intend only to kill the enemies of God, which was properly his work, to which he was design'd by the Spirit of God, in his whole Calling; but that he died himself in the ruine, was his suffering not his design: it was like a Soldier fighting against his enemies, at the command of his General, who undertakes the service, though he knows he shall die for it.

Thus did *Eleazar* the Brother of *Judas Maccabeus*; he supposing the grand enemy *Antiochus*, to be upon a rowred Elephant, goes under the Beast, and kills him, who, with his fall, crush'd the Magnanimous Prince to death: He intended not to kill himself, but *Antiochus*; he would venture himself, or suffer death.

The fact of *Saul* is no imitable Precedent, because it hath the grim aspect of despair upon it; but the Jewish Rabbins soften the fact, and say, that it is not lawful for any man to perish by his own hands, unless the prolongation of his life be a manifest dishonour to God, and to a Cause of Religion: And upon this account they excuse both *Saul* and *Sampson*; for they knew, if they should fall, or abide respectively in the hands of scorners, the dishonour of their persons would disparage their Religion directly, and so obliquely likewise extend and reach to God.

The fact of *Rafis* is extracted out of the Book of *Maccabees*, and the most Learned of the Papists that assert this Book to be Canonical, and all Protestants that affirm it to

be Apocriphal, do both concenter in this Opinion; that an example of so dangerous a complexion, ought by no means to be imitated.

To the example of *Pelagia* that drown'd her self, & other Virgins that threw themselves from precipices, because they would not be ravished before they were put to death which was their sentence in the primitive Persecutions, (as we may glean from Ecclesiastical Story,) unless they would disclaim Christianity, and which Precedents are so much insisted upon, in some cases, to abet Self-Homicide; I answer, that their Fate was to be pitied and deplor'd, but not justified; because it was like dying before the wound was given, a leaping into the Sea for fear of Shipwrack: it is to do violence to the body to preserve it chaste, to burn a Temple from keeping it, or at least preventing it from being profaned: And therefore it is no just excuse, to say the Virgin Martyrs did it lest they should lose their Crown of Virginitie; for she that loseth it by violence, is nevertheless a Virgin before God, but more a Martyr. But then, if any one can suppose it fit to be objected, that if they lost their material Virginitie, there was danger lest whilst they were abus'd, they also should be tempted, and consent; I answer, that a certain sin is not to be done to avoid an uncertain one: and yet this could not be considerable in the cases of these Virgin Martyrs; for they were not only primarily infinitely fortified by the Grace of God, but secondarily their austere lives, the holy habits of their souls, the severe instructions of their spiritual guides, their expectation of eternal Crowns and Chaplets, and the virtue of Chastity, which at that time was under an huge estimate, had exceedingly secured them against that temptation: besides all this, they had the sentence of death not only within them, but upon them; and the im-  
mediate

mediate tortures they were to be harrassed with after their ravishments, was a competent mortification for any such fears.

I shall now descend to unravel the causes that possibly may be the motives and incentives to this unnatural Self-Assassination, and encounter them with their proper Remedies.

And first, I have heard that some persons that have been dislodged from the height of a prosperous Fortune, and forced to bow under the pressure of a ruinous and broken Patrimony, have bound themselves by an incogitant Vow, if such or such an accident went cross, or Eccentrick to their desires, to lay destructive hands upon themselves, and have effected it: But to these rash persons I shall answer, that this precipitate and impious Vow, is like that, that a man through heat of blood, engages in to kill his Brother, this must be broken; neither is this breach of Vow, the choice of the lesser sin, but only the loosening of the lesser Bond; the Bond of Charity being greater than the Bond of a Vow: for in the terms of inconsistency, when both cannot stand together, the lesser must surrender it self to the greater. And if persons are assailed with a violent poverty, let them comply with the rule of Divines, thank God for what they have, and trust him for what they have not; for who without impiety can distrust that Power, that can buoy up his sunk estate, though languished away to never so low an ebb, and with new supplies recruit his necessities out of his two unexhaustible Exchequers, Clouds and Providence.

Secondly, Poverty is like a Girdle, though it pinches the body with its uneasy cincture, yet it keeps the garments from falling into looseness and disorder: so this, though it girdle in, and circumscribe our fortune with too close a pressure,

pressure, yet it keeps us from breaking out into excesses, and other vicious sallies, and reaches us the exercise of Humility, Patience, Fortitude, under the cross Prudence, Hope, and other Theological Virtues, which may be much improved and heightened by this calamitous condition. I may add this, that if persons shall bear that cheapness and neglect this necessitous condition throws upon them with a clear and undisturbed composure of mind, every stone of contempt that is thrown at them, will become a precious one to embellish and adorn their Crown of Glory.

Thirdly, let those who are grated upon by poverty, to temper and mollifie the sullen and rugged onsets of it, reflect upon that felicity that dwells in the narrow cottage of a virtuous poor man, how unbroken are his sleeps, how calm his breast, how composed his mind, how easie his provision, how healthful his day, how sober his night, how temperate his mouth, how joyful his heart; and then they would never admire the noises, the diseases, the crowd of passions, and violence of unnatural appetites, that fill the houses of the luxurious, or seek to entertain those gawdy and pompous cares that gnaw the hearts of the envious, or discompose the heads of the ambitious.

Fourthly, Shame arising either from reproach, or fear of an ignominious death, may contribute much to this Self-Homicide. Now, if those reproaches and aspersions that are shed upon mens fame, are possibly and intrinsically true, and then they may deserve them; and God may permit them to be scattered upon them, to reduce them to a survey of their own follies and imperfections: but if they are false, and they sustain them with an evenness and calmness of spirit, the greater Crown is due to the martyrdom of their Patience: for calumnies, if neglected, evaporate into the foul air that fed them; if men  
are

are angry at them, they seem to acknowledg them.

Farther, let those who are bespattered and besmeared with unjust aspersions, consider, that it is the nature of obstinate and inexpugnable wickedness, to affirm that of others it merites it self; and it is the only comfort the guilty have, to find, at least believe, that there are none innocent.

Fifthly, if fear of a shameful death does excite them to this Tragedy, let them consider, that to prevent the hand of Justice, or the hand of Tyranny in striking, is sometimes to prevent the Hand and Providence of God in saving, and is an act of desperation against the hopes of a good man, for pardon and help may arrive in the interval; so that not only the mercy of the Prince, but likewise the mercy of God, who sometimes strikes persons here, by exacting of them the easy fine of a temporal death, that he may spare them hereafter: both which, by this wilful and impenitent assassination, are wholly anticipated and extinguished.

Sixthly, I have heard of many, who having for ignominious crimes acted by them, been condemned to a more uncouth thralldom, released their bodies, by violently dismantling their bodies the nobler prison of their souls: but had these persons assoil'd, and washed off the stains and blemishes of life by a severe compunction; they would have found their prisons transform'd into Palaces, where there should have been Possession without fear, Charity without stain, Society without envying, Communication of joys without expiring, and every cloud of sorrow should have reflected a new gleam of Comfort multiplied to a never-ceasing Numeration; and every fetter would have hang'd as easie upon them, as if they were circumscrib'd with a Ray of Light; and when they had  
shaken



shaken off their chains, and rags of mortality together, they would have been admitted to dwell in a Countrey where an enemy never entred, and from whence a friend never returned.

Lastly, excess of Pain may be a Provocative to these Self-Tragedies. But let those that are Infested, and worried with the Torture and Assaults of it, set before themselves the example of St. *Paul*, to be their Pilot to steer them in this Affair, who had learned to put the Afflictions of this Life (under which the Agony of Pain is comprehended) and the External Happiness of the Life hereafter, into an equal Ballance, and after a serious Scrutiny and Survey, he found that the calamities of this Life were infinitely overway'd and out-pois'd by that weight of glory which shall be Reveald in us hereafter.

Let them also who are assaulted with pain, propose to themselves the examples of the Primitive Martyrs, as motives and incentives to Patience, who when they could not obey the Commands of wicked and impious Princes against God, yet obeyed them against themselves, by paying the Tribute of their Lives to the Truth they Asserted, and so purchas'd Heaven by Suffering, and that Crown of Martyrdom, which whosoever Gains, is no great loser.

But the last and indeed most considerable causes of this Self-Assassination, are either an erroneous Conscience, or else a scrupulous, warp'd and distorted with wild and irregular opinions, which usually reduce those that embrace them to a melancholly Distemper, and that at last Determines in Self-Homicide.

As to the first, I shall distinguish with our modern Casuists, that we ought to obey Conscience, but not the error of Conscience; For all the obligation Conscience passeth

passeth upon us; is Derivative from God: God it is true commands us to follow our Conscience; but yet at the same time he commands us not to sin; because his commanding us to follow our Conscience, supposes our Conscience instructed by his Word and right Reason, and hath appointed means it should be so. But that Conscience offers a sin to the obedience, is the mans fault, and not the intention of God: A Right Conscience directly and finally, binds us to the Action it self. An erring Conscience cannot do that because the Action it offers is Criminal; But it makes us to take that instead of what it ought to bind us to. That is it hath the same Authority, but an evil exercise of it.

But the scrupulous Conscience is of a more nice consideration; and therefore is to be treated and manag'd with tenderness. And therefore a Modern Casuist excellently well describes it when he thus represents it. Scruple (says he) is like a little stone in the Foot, if you set it upon the ground, it hurts you; if you hold it up, you cannot go forwards; it is a trouble when the trouble is over, a doubt when doubts are resolved, a little Party behind the Hedge, when the main Army is broken, and the Field clear'd; and when the Conscience is instructed, and in its way, and girt for Action, a light trifling Reason, or an absurd Fear, hinders it from beginning the Journey, or proceeding in the way, or resting in the Journeys end. Very often it hath no Reason at all for its Inducement; but commences from indisposition of Body, Pusillanimity, Melancholly, a troubled Head, sleepless Nights, the Society of the Timorous from Solitude, Ignorance, or unseason'd or imprudent Notices of Affairs and Things, a strong Phansie or weak Judgement, or from any thing that may abuse the Reason into Irresolution and giddiness, or unsettledness.



It is indeed a direct walking in the Dark, where we see nothing to affright us, but we fancy many things, and the phantasms produced in the lower Regions of Fancy, nursed by Folly, and born upon the arms of Fear, do trouble us: but if Reason be its Parent, it is born in the Twilight, and the Mother is so little, that the Daughter is a Fly, with a short head, and a long sting, enough to discompose the judgment of a prudent person; the reason of scruple is ever as obscure as the light of a Glow-worm, not fit to govern any Action, and yet it is suffered to stand in the midst of all its enemies, and like the flies of Egypt, vex and trouble the whole Army.

Now, the Advices collected out of the Magazin of Casuistical Theology, to dislodge these scruples, are these;

First, let the scrupulous man avoid all excess in Mortifications, and Corporal Austerities, because these are apt to disquiet the body, and consequently, to disorder the mind, by the fond prevailing persuasions of the World; they usually produce great opinions of Sanctity, and great confidences of God's Favour, and by spending the Religion of the Man in exterior significations, make him, by those, to take the measures of an uniform Life, and a regular Piety, and then his Religion shall be scruple and impertinency, full of trouble, but good and profitable for little or nothing.

Secondly, let scrupulous persons interest themselves in as few Questions of Intricate Dispute, and Minute Disquisitions as they can; they that answer fewest, do commonly disturb themselves with most curious Questions can puzzle every man, but can profit no man; they are a certain disturbance, they are Rebels in the Kingdom of the Inner-man; they are just the same things in Speculation, that scruples are in Practice: and therefore, because

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Notice properly tends and directs to Action, the increase them will multiply these.

Thirdly, let scrupulous persons take care that their Religion be like their Life; not done like Pictures when they are curiously dressed, but looking as the Actions of Life are attir'd; that is so as things can be constantly done, that it be apparell'd with the usual circumstances, imitating the Examples, and following the usages of the Best and most Prudent Men of his Communion, striving in nothing to be singular, nor doing violence to any thing of Nature, unless it be an instrument, or a temptation to a Vice; for some men mortifie their Natures rather than their vicious Inclinations, or evil Habits; and so make Religion an Enemy, a Snare, and a Burden: for, in scrupulous, that is, in melancholy persons, Nature is to be cherished in every thing where there is no danger, that is, where she is not petulant, or troublesome. Such men have more need of something to repair their House, than to lessen it.

Fourthly, let scrupulous persons be cautious that they make no Vows of any lasting Employment, or Obedience; for the Disease that is within, and this new matter from without, will create new fears and scruples upon the Manner, the Degrees, and Circumstances of performance. Therefore, whatever good thing they intend, let them do it when they can, when it is pleasant, profitable, honest, or convenient; but let them alwaies, as much as they can, reserve their liberty.

To sum up all, the Casuists generally advise where persons are apt to be benighted with an erroneous Conscience, or stung and afflicted with a scrupulous one; before they embrace or give themselves up to any opinion, they should entertain it under these Notions and Qualifications; 1. That it be that which advances most the Glory

Glory of God, the Reputation of his Name, and is most agreeing with his Attributes. Secondly, that which is most agreeable with the Letter of Scripture, and complies most practically with the purpose and design of it. Thirdly, that which Prudent, Pious, and Just Men have first asserted, and then practised, and whole Nations have approved. Fourthly, that which is agreeable to common Life. Fifthly, that which is best for the publick. Sixthly, that which is more Holy. Seventhly, that which gives least confidence to sin, or sinners. Eighthly, that which is most charitable to others. Ninthly, that which gives least offence and scandal. And Tenthly and Lastly, in destitution of all things, else that which primarily is most useful to the publick, and secondarily to our selves, in the Conduct of Humane Life. He that admits an opinion without these salutary cautions, may possibly suffer it so long without disturbance, to dwell in his Conscience, until at length it become a Native, which should have been suddenly dislodged, and turned out as an intruding, destructive Inmate; and then like an ingrateful Serpent, having warm'd its venome in his bosome, it will at last destroy him.

Since then Self-killing is opposite to the Eternal Law of God, of which the Law of Nature is but a Transcript, repugnant to the Law of Reason, and declared unlawful by a Superfétation of positive Laws, both Canon and Civil, if acted by deliberation, choice, and consent, and fortified by the concurrent usage of elder Nations, who customarily threw some Character of Disgrace and Obloquie upon the bodies of those who had wilfully destroyed themselves. I may justly wind up this Discourse in this Determination; That Self-Homicide is wilful Murder.

THE

**W**Hereas in that elaborate unhappy Treatise still'd Bithanathos, there is exhibited a Copious Register of some Elder and Braver Romans, who embezeld their Lives by an Imprudent and Extra-Judicial-Violence offered to themselves, as namely, Cato Uticensis, a man that durst be severely honest in a loose and licentious Age; and Bruteus his Son in Law, that great Exemplar of a Virtuous Life, of whom it may be said, so far as it relates to the Guidance and Conduct of a Practical Morality, that he saw more at the Noon of Night, than many do at the Noon of Day; and others of a less Estimate and Repute, who out of Animosity, Regret and Passion, by an unnatural and injurious Violation, demolish'd the Prison of their Bodies, and so Enfranchis'd and Releas'd their Souls from the Natural Restraints and Confinements of their Flesh. But to this I Answer, that these Tragedies and Bloody Impressions perform'd by these Persons upon themselves, were not the Legal Results of Common Natural Instinct, or the Uniform and Regular Products of the Law of Nature; But rather the prodigious Issue and misbappen Births of those three Furies, Impatience, Emulation and Ambition, which in elder Times not only lash'd the wisest Romans into those Excesses and wild Exorbitancies, Posterity hath since generally concluded them Guilty of. But likewise at the last precipitated the Common-wealth of Rome it self into a final Ruin and Extinction; And this was well observed by Julian Sirnamed the Apostate, who in his last Scene of Life and Agony of Death, concluded and Expir'd with this Rational Expression, as it is Recorded by that Judicious Historian Ammianus Marcellinus, in the Description of his Life, *Equo enim Judicio* (says the Dying Emperour, as he Relates it) *Timidus est ac Ignavus, qui cum non oportet, Mori Desiderat, & qui Refugiat, cum sit opportunum.* Now this Evil Principle of Self-Homicide, had possibly shed

a Malignant Operation and Influence upon some of the Greeks; which discover'd it self in some unnatural Violences Ailed upon themselves, which mov'd and incited Aristotle not to allow it to be so much as Brave and Magnanimous for a Man to Kill himself for the avoiding any evil, for thus in the Third and Fifth Book of his Ethics he determines to Die that we may avoid Povertie: The Torments of Love, or any evil Affliction is not the part of a valiant Man, but of a Coward. And that the Grecians generally did abominate this Fact of Self-Killing, is evident from the example of the Milesians, who to cast some signal Obloquie upon the memory of those Virgins that hang'd themselves, expos'd their Bodies to be a public Spectacle: And Strabo informs us, that the Indian Priests and Wise men, blam'd the Fact of Calantis, and that they resented with Regret and Hatred the hasty Deaths of Proud and Impatient Persons; and this made Aristotle in his Ethics to aver, that they that kill themselves, hastning their own Deaths before the public command enjoys them, are injurious to the Common-wealth, from whose service and profit they substract themselves if they be Innocent, and if they be Criminal, they withdraw themselves from her Justice. And therefore certainly it was an Heroick Determination of dying King Darius when he was mortally wounded by Beilus and his Barbarous Complices in that Assassination, as his Tragedy is Pothetically Related by Q. Curtius: *Alieno mori malo scelere quam meo*; I had rather dye by another mans Impiety than my own; I shall wind up this Postscript in that excellent Assertion of St. Austin, *Magis enim meus Infirma deprehenditur, quæ ferre non potest duram Corporis sui Sanitatem, aut stultam vulgi Opinionem*. It is not greatness, but littleness of Spirit, it is Impatience or Pride that makes a man Kill himself to avoid trouble and disquiet to his Body, or dishonour to his Name amongst Fools.

FINIS.



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